IV.   Summary and Recommendations

The most recent results from the Office of Personnel Management's View Point Survey reveal that nearly all HHS employees (92 percent) report that they are constantly looking for ways to do better in their job. And yet, according to the 2012 results, only 61 percent say they feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things, and only 42 percent feel that their creativity and innovation are rewarded. In terms of our overall innovation score we are ranked 8th among the 18 large agencies.[1] We believe we can do better and that it should be our goal to rank at the top of the innovation index. The numbers speak for themselves; it is clear that we must do more to capitalize on the ingenuity of our workforce, empower them to take action and reward innovation and risk-taking within our workforce.[2]

According to the *Partnership for Public Service*, there are six factors that have a disproportionately high impact on the overall innovation score.[3] These relate to whether employees:

- are given a real opportunity to improve their skills in the organization
- feel that their supervisor/team leader provides them with opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills
- have a high level of respect for their organization's senior leaders
- are satisfied with involvement in decisions that affect their work
- are rewarded for providing high quality products and services
- have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes

We believe that these are the metrics that our Department needs to use to gauge the results of our work. The Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS), which is conducted annually, is certainly a crude measure of our ability to achieve success in these areas, but we also believe it is a good starting point and one that can provide valuable insight at the office, division and departmental levels.

Many of our strategies draw upon the conclusions of the *Partnership for Public Service's* most recent release of the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government. The report cited the need for Federal leaders and managers to emphasize to employees the importance of innovation and risk-taking, to create open and collaborative cultures that allow innovations to take root, and the importance of offering appropriate incentives and rewards for innovation.[4]

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[1] Partnership for Public Service, *The Best place to Work in the Federal Government 2012 Rankings.* See http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/index.php

[2] 2012 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results.   See http://www.hhs.gov/asa/ohr/fhcs/hhs2012-evs-report.pdf

[3] Partnership for Public Service, *The Best place to Work in the Federal Government 2012 Rankings.* See http://bestplacestowork.org/BPTW/index.php

[4] Ibid.

Change takes time, clear expectations of outcomes and, most importantly, **leadership**. The elements we describe in this strategy are the keys to accelerating the creation of a culture that rewards and expects employees to reach for a higher bar of performance. This only works, however, if management acts in lockstep to help achieve these goals.

We ask that you expose the HHS leadership to the principles laid out in this memo and help us communicate our initiatives broadly across the Department. We also look to your support for communicating the importance of these innovation metrics to managers. They are certainly not the only way that we should measure progress but they do serve as a universal benchmark against which we can measure process. Finally, we ask that you consider implementing innovation metrics in your senior leaders' and managers' performance plans and regularly follow up on the achievement of these goals.

We believe that a stronger connection between innovation expectations and the rewarding of entrepreneurial behavior and risk-taking will play a critical role in encouraging the adoption of tools and programs discussed here. If we can achieve the goals described in this paper, we will have not just planted the seeds for systemic culture change at the department but seen the first saplings start to grow.